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ABSTRACT

This paper describes West Virginia University's Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education, which involved the university and 21 Professional Development Schools (PDSs). The model is based on a set of novice teacher characteristics and effective teacher education program characteristics. It is a 5-year, dual-degree teacher preparation program. One of its most critical attributes is a series of intense clinical experiences that occur at the PDSs. All of the PDSs were chosen because of their commitment to partnering with the university in their efforts related to school renewal/professional development and to preparing the next generation of teachers. All practica in the teacher education program are attached to courses in the pedagogy core. The courses and practica are collaboratively planned and closely linked. All of the PDSs were asked to develop strategic plans to provide guidance in the areas of professional development, school renewal, and partnering with the university. This paper describes the experiences of one PDS, Suncrest Primary. Efforts included initiation of a graduate assistant/site coordinator model in which a full-time graduate student was employed to partner teach with the site coordinator. Evaluation of this effort indicated that it had a very positive impact on everyone involved. (Contains 11 references.) (SM)

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A Graduate Assistant/Veteran Teacher Supervision Model In the Benedum Collaborative

Introduction

An important part of the professional development school/school-university renewal movement is the restructuring of roles and relationships among university and public school faculty. In the Benedum Collaborative at West Virginia University, coordination and supervision of preservice teachers in the newly-created five-year teacher education program provides an example of this restructuring. A site-based coordination model, piloted at Suncrest Primary Professional Development School in 1990, is described in this paper. Lessons learned from this pilot influenced the design of the Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education. Over the course of the eleven years Suncrest has been a PDS, the model has evolved and been institutionalized. This paper describes the history of the model as well as the findings from an evaluation effort conducted in 2000.

Context: The Benedum Collaborative

The now-famous clarion call from the National Commission on Excellence in Education which claimed that our Nation was "at risk" – that "we have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" (1984, p.1) was a call to action for educational reform across the United States in the mid-eighties. Among those responding was The Holmes Group, a consortium of research institutions who drafted three seminal reform reports: *Tomorrow's Schools, Tomorrow's Teachers,* and *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*. In 1987 West Virginia University (WVU) joined the Holmes Group (now Holmes Partnership) as a critical step in its own educational reform effort. WVU joined the Holmes Group to "make a public commitment to vigorous, extensive, and long-term action to change the way we educate teachers and other education professionals, to connect our college more closely with schools, to improve the conditions of teaching, to create standards of entry into teaching, and to make schools better places in which to teach and learn (College of Human Resources and Education, 1994, p.6)."

To support this long-term educational reform agenda, WVU turned to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. And since 1989, this Foundation has contributed over five million dollars to sustain this work. Their support began with a grant to fund what was then called the Benedum Project. (College of Human Resources and Education, 1988) This project had three overarching goals:

1. To reconceptualize those programs that prepare teachers and other education professionals to make these programs intellectually sound and congruent with one another.

2. To establish professional development schools that will bridge the gap between research and practice in the profession.

3. To establish collaborative processes, strategies, and structures that will make these changes last." (p. vii)

In a sense, Benedum Project participants began with goal #3. Their first step was to reach out to educational stakeholders across West Virginia and invite them into the process of collaborating to improve education in the state. Over 250 educators from public schools and higher education joined together in 1989 to work toward the project's goals, and since that time nearly 1000 have actively participated in its initiatives.

At a local resort, West Virginia's Alpine Lake, project partners engaged in an intense series of meetings which resulted in two documents which, along with the *Belief Statements of Benedum Project Professional Development Schools*, became the foundation of all subsequent reform work in teacher preparation at West Virginia University. These documents reflected the set of beliefs project partners had related to the *Characteristics of an Effective Novice Teacher* and *the Characteristics of an Effective Teacher Education Program*. The design of the new Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education at West Virginia University is thoroughly grounded in these sets of beliefs which follow:

Characteristics of the Novice Teacher

1. We believe that the novice teacher should have a commitment to and skills for life-long learning.

2. We believe that the novice teacher should be an effective communicator.

3. We believe that the novice teacher should recognize that teaching is a professional, moral, and ethical enterprise, should understand moral issues and ethical practices in educational environments, and should have developed ethical frameworks which facilitate effective teaching.

4. We believe the novice teacher should be a facilitator of learning for all students.

5. We believe that the novice teacher should have in-depth knowledge of pedagogy.

6. We believe that the novice teacher should have in-depth knowledge of content.

7. We believe that the novice teacher should effectively integrate content and pedagogy.

8. We believe that the novice teacher should be a reflective practitioner.

9. We believe that the novice teacher should be aware of, and have respect for, human diversity.

10. We believe that the novice teacher should be liberally educated.

(College of Human Resources and Education, 1994)

The Characteristics of an Effective Teacher Education Program

1. Attention to students' prior experiences in schools and their preconceptions about teaching, for this is the basis of their further learning

2. In-depth preparation in content and pedagogy and careful attention to the integration of knowledge concerning what and how to teach

3. Continuous mentoring by teacher educators, practicing teachers, content area specialists, and peers

4. Opportunities to encounter and respond constructively to diversity and change

5. Modeling of professional and ethical attitudes and practices

6. Ample opportunities for active engagement in learning (rather than passive reception of information) and for reflection, critical thinking, and systematic inquiry

7. Cooperative learning experiences in cohort groups

8. Carefully planned and sequenced clinical experiences beginning early in students' programs

9. Site-based organization and supervision of field experiences

10. Systematic integration of all elements of the program so that the program has coherence

11. Relevant standards and procedures for admission to and continuation in the program that reflect our goals for the novice teacher

12. Collaboration among university and school personnel in the design and delivery of the program to ensure that the program effectively integrates theory, research, and practice

13. Collaborative assessment and revision of the program which is ongoing, documented, and research-based in order to ensure the program's continued effectiveness.

(College of Human Resources and Education, 1994)

What follows is a brief description of the program, called the Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education, which was based on these two sets of characteristics. (In 1996, partners engaged in the Benedum Project agreed that the reform work initiated in 1989 had moved well beyond something that reasonably could be described as a "project." At that time participants ceased to refer to the work as the Benedum Project. However the Benedum name had become so closely associated with this reform initiative

that the network comprised of West Virginia University and the 21 professional development schools (PDSs) assumed the name of the Benedum Collaborative.)

The Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education is a nationally accredited five-year dual-degree teacher preparation program. Students graduate with a bachelor of arts degree in their discipline and a master of arts degree in education. Because the degrees are integrated, diplomas are conferred simultaneously at the end of the fifth year. The program is comprised of three cores: the teaching discipline core, the liberal studies core, and the pedagogy core. This design ensures that graduates are as strong in their content areas as they are in teaching. Issues related to diversity, special needs populations, and instructional technology are woven throughout the learning activities in the program as "strands." Students complete action research projects; the results of which are presented in both a mini-conference on campus and to faculties in their "home" professional development schools. There are three matriculation checkpoints in the program where students must submit portfolios: for initial admission, for admission to the graduate year of the program, and upon graduation.

One of the most critical attributes of the Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education is its series of intense clinical experiences. These clinical experiences take place in the Benedum Collaborative's 21 professional development schools. These schools are located in five counties surrounding West Virginia University. In 1990 the first set of PDSs was selected. The rigorous selection process involved applicants successfully completing an application where school-based teams described, among other things, their expressions of the following five Benedum Collaborative Belief Statements.:

Belief Statements of the Benedum Collaborative

1. *All in a Professional Development School are learners.*
   The focus of a Professional Development school is learning. Students, teachers, administrators and parents are all learners in a Professional Development School. Students will have the opportunity to be active learners in an environment that provides for individual needs and abilities. Teachers and administrators will share ideas and opportunities for professional development, including using and contributing to current research. This can occur in the school site as we reflect upon what we know from practice, as well as in collaboration with West Virginia University faculty. Parents and the community will learn from the activities in a Professional Development School through their involvement with the Professional Development School site.

2. *All in a Professional Development School have the opportunity for success.*
   The members of a Professional Development School will design and implement activities and programs and develop a climate that promotes and recognizes success for all. The school community (which includes students, teachers, administrators, and parents) should be provided with opportunities for growth and challenge. All members of a Professional Development School community expect to be successful.

3. *The organization of a Professional Development School encourages all to be empowered.*

The interactions and organization of a Professional Development School will initiate and support the empowerment of all members of the school community. A shared decision-making approach will be used in all aspects of school life; ideas will be valued and all will be encouraged and supported in taking risks. Open communication among all groups involved in the school community is necessary for this to occur.

4. *A Professional Development School fosters an environment of mutual respect.*

In a Professional Development School, all respect self, the school community, and the global community. A Professional Development School will provide experiences that foster appreciation of cultural and human diversity and will promote self-esteem in the entire school community.

5. *A Professional Development School promotes curriculum and instruction that evolves from continual review and that reflects the school's vision.*

In a Professional Development School, the best of practice and the best of research guide review and revision of curriculum and instruction.

(College of Human Resources and Education, 1994)

Professional development schools in the Benedum Collaborative are "regular" public schools (as opposed to laboratory schools with special populations/faculties). However, they are unique in that all schools selected have demonstrated a commitment to partner with West Virginia University in their efforts related to school renewal/professional development as well as to preparing the next generation of teachers.

Students in the Benedum Collaborative Model of Teacher Education have the advantage of completing all six practica (totally approximately 1000 hours of classroom time) as members of these vigorous, active public school learning communities. At the point of admission, students are placed in cohorts in their "home" PDSs. Cohort size is determined by the size and composition of the PDS. Students remain associated with this particular school throughout the remaining six semesters. This long-term involvement with one school community and one cohort of preservice teachers has been beneficial as preservice teachers have the opportunity to build a deep understanding of a faculty, a group of students, and a community all within a context of support from their peer cohort.

All practica in this teacher education program are attached to courses in the pedagogy core. The courses and practica are collaboratively planned and closely linked. Following is a brief description of practica and their associated courses:

Practicum I (Tutor):

- Placement in the program: Semester 5
- Credit hours: One.
- Time in PDS: Two hours per week.
- Course(s) connection: *Learning I.*
- Purpose of practicum: Building an understanding of individual differences in children and their learning.

Practicum II (Tutor):
- Placement in the program: Semester 6
- Credit hours: One.
- Time in PDS: Two hours per week.
- Course(s) connection: *Learning II* and *Literacy I* (elementary only).
- Purpose of practicum: Interacting with small numbers of children to practice teaching and learning strategies.

Practicum III (Participant):
- Placement in the program: Semester 7
- Credit hours: Two.
- Time in PDS: Five hours per week.
- Course(s) connection: *Instructional Design and Assessment* and methods courses.
- Purpose of practicum: Practicing teaching and assessment strategies with individuals, small groups and whole class.

Practicum IV (Participant):
- Placement in the program: Semester 8
- Credit hours: Four.
- Time in PDS: Fourteen hours per week.
- Course(s) connection: *Managing and Organizing Learning Environments* and methods courses.
- Purpose of practicum: Practicing teaching, assessment, and management strategies with individuals, small groups and whole class.

Professional Internship (Intern):
- Placement in the program: Semester 9
- Credit hours: Twelve.
- Time in PDS: Full time.
- Course(s) connection: *Teacher as Leader.*
- Purpose of practicum: Experiencing a full-time teaching experience where planning, teaching, assessing, and managing in classrooms is refined.

Instructional Practicum (Intern):
- Placement in the program: Semester 10
- Credit hours: Three.
- Time in PDS: 135 hours.
- Course(s) connection: Twelve hours of graduate level professional development courses.
- Purpose of practicum: Designing a practicum in collaboration with PDS faculty that serves mutual interests and learning needs.

The approach to managing and organizing all the site-based practica in the program is collaborative. Each PDS is allocated funding for this purpose, the amount of which is determined by the number or preservice teachers assigned to the school. The PDSs then

develop an individual plan for supervision, management, and coordination and pay for it based on the funding allocated. Each PDS's plan is unique, however, in general, funds support coordinator and host teacher stipends and released time, seminars for preservice teachers, professional development for PDS faculty, and materials. Key players in the process of developing and implementing this plan are the PDSs' teacher education coordinators, the PDSs' Benedum Collaborative site steering committees, the PDSs' principals, and a WVU faculty member who serves as a liaison between the PDS and the university.

This approach demonstrates the restructuring of rules, roles, and relationships that are ongoing in the Benedum Collaborative. Other partnerships across the nation have also been engaged in developing restructured models of school renewal and teacher education. The role of teacher education coordinator, in particular, has been examined and re-invented. While some partnerships do retain a traditional approach to supervision where university faculty are responsible for all supervision of preservice teachers, in many partnerships K-12 practitioners share these responsibilities with university faculty. For example, some models involve assigning university professors to PDSs for several days per week for the purpose of providing direct supervision to preservice teachers, i.e. East Longmeadow High and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Seidman, 1991); others assign direct supervision tasks to master teachers in PDSs while full-time university faculty take on the role of coordinating the clinical experiences, i.e. Augusta State University (Cooper, 1998) and University of Kansas and Turner Elementary (Wyatt, 1999); and others implement a variety of coordination models depending on the relationship that exists between individual PDSs and the university, i.e. University of Southern Maine (Walters, 1998 and Broyles, 1990), University of California, Riverside (Sandholtz and Finian, 1998), and the Benedum Collaborative.

Case in Point: Suncrest Primary Professional Development School

At one of the Benedum Collaborative's PDSs, Suncrest Primary, school faculty joined with university faculty to design their unique approach to implementing the five-year teacher education program. This approach reflected the school's history with teacher education at West Virginia University as well as their newly-empowered role as a partner in the Benedum Collaborative.

Suncrest Primary is a small school serving a residential area about a mile from West Virginia University. The school includes families from all socioeconomic levels and has a history of strong parental involvement. The school has ten teachers: two teachers for a combined head start/special needs population, two teachers for each of grades kindergarten through three, and a full-time principal. The faculty have a strong commitment to contribute to the teacher education program at West Virginia University.

Suncrest's History with Teacher Education

Preservice teachers from West Virginia University typically came to Suncrest Primary School as student teachers the last semester of their college-preparatory program. Typically, there were four or five student teachers per semester. Some came the first of the semester while others came the second. These WVU students were assigned to

experienced teachers for half of their student teaching practica with the other half semester at another school. The half semester at Suncrest consisted of eight weeks with one teacher in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades. Seldom did the teachers accept assignment of students from other practica assignments because they felt that the gains of the students in their classrooms did not equal the time that the teachers invested in orienting, supervising, and mentoring the student teachers. The progress and growth of the preservice teachers were not as evident with the early field experience placements because of the shorter assignment time at the school, and the remaining practica experience assignments were typically at other schools.

The teachers also felt that communicating with many different supervisors from the University was cumbersome and time-consuming. Professors and graduate students typically were assigned to supervise the student teachers, and these supervisory personnel from the University changed periodically. This change often meant new orientation to the school, its curricular goals and beliefs, and getting acquainted with the teaching staff. Personalities had to be learned as well as the professional expectations of the host teachers, the supervisors, and the student teachers. Because of their various class loads, the University personnel were not at the school on a consistent basis to assist with supervision and give critical guidance and assistance during the student teaching semester. Many of the preservice teachers left with only partial participation in many of the school's activities and goals outside of the classroom because of their limited time at the school and their limited exposure to the other experienced and professional teaching staff.

Implementing Change

All professional development schools were asked to develop strategic plans to provide guidance in the areas of professional development, school renewal, and partnering with West Virginia University. As a newly-named professional development school, Suncrest's strategic plan included four main goals: (1) implementing a developmentally-appropriate curriculum, (2) addressing individual differences, and (3) encouraging life-long learning for students, faculty, preservice teachers, parents, and the community.

Goal (4) included developing a Teacher Education Center model which would provide preservice teachers with the unique opportunity to remain at Suncrest for the four semesters of their practica experiences. This model would allow for the preservice teachers, by serving all of their practica at one placement, to become better acquainted with the background, culture, and academic experiences of Suncrest students. Experienced teachers would have extensive opportunities to observe preservice teachers develop over time, and this longer exposure would offer meaningful and long-term mentoring. Opportunities for personal and professional growth were also available to both Suncrest's and the University's faculties as they collaborated to coordinate coursework and practica experiences.

The second focus of the proposal was to have a site coordinator placed at Suncrest on a half-time basis in order to give increased and continued guidance and feedback to the preservice teachers. The site coordinator would consult with the school's faculty and the

principal to arrange placements, develop the on-site program, assess the practica students' progress, and establish various ways to help them grow professionally. Several options for providing a half-time site coordinator were jointly discussed by WVU and the Suncrest faculty. Agreement was unanimous that the best candidate for the position would be a Suncrest teacher. (Simultaneously, other options such as graduate students and university instructors serving as the consistent coordinators of practica were being piloted at other PDSs). The WVU students would value the practical experiences of the coordinator who, at the same time, was a classroom teacher; and the teacher would be well accepted and trusted as a peer -- aware of the faculty's personalities, interests, and strengths-- which would allow for close matches of personnel for the practica placements. The teacher/coordinator would also be familiar with the school's curriculum, visions and beliefs, parent and community groups, and "personality" of the school. After the coordinator was selected, there was the critical task of selecting a half-time permanent substitute to share the classroom duties of the released teacher. It is important to note that the County Superintendent was supportive by funding the costs associated with the various personnel benefits in this endeavor.

For the program to succeed, all agreed that the primary students' program of instruction should remain of the highest quality with the joint teaching arrangement. It was therefore important that the selected teacher be a permanent substitute in order to maintain the continuity of instruction for the primary-age students. Interviews of interested candidates were conducted with the principal, site coordinator, grade-level teachers, the practica experiences coordinator and the chair of curriculum and instruction from West Virginia University.

There were many stakeholders involved with this new model of supervision. Of foremost concern was that the Suncrest Primary School students would continue to receive quality instruction! It was also important that parents were satisfied with the co-teaching arrangement, that faculty would support the model, that preservice teachers would receive regular and quality supervision, and WVU would have the occasional services of the half-day coordinator for meetings and collaborative efforts. In the fall of 1990, the pilot was initiated. Over the course of nine years, two classroom substitutes filled the role of partner teaching with the site coordinator. The pilot was overwhelmingly successful for all the involved stakeholders.

When the new five-year teacher education program began to be implemented, and the first cohort in August, 1997 had their initial placements in the professional development schools, it was realized that more PDSs would be needed for the placement of practica preservice students. Because of the limited budget that Suncrest Primary School now had to use for funding the co-teaching/supervision model, it was no longer possible to employ a substitute teacher. The principal, the faculty, the preservice teachers, and WVU did not wish to abandon the success of the half-day site coordinator model.

Because the Benedum grant could no longer support the clinical aspect of the program, the Director of the Benedum Collaborative, in the summer of 1999, proposed a budgeting

plan for the coordination of all practica students. This budget was based on the number of preservice students each PDS was assigned.

Graduate Assistant/Veteran Teacher Model

In the fall of 1999, the graduate assistant/site coordinator model was initiated. The faculty at Suncrest Primary proposed that, using their allocated WVU Teacher Center budget, a full-time graduate student be employed to partner teach with the site coordinator. Suncrest's teachers could offer valuable mentoring, and the half-day classroom teaching experience would be of great benefit to a graduate assistant. Again, there could be no compromises for the stakeholders. It was of utmost importance that the county school system be consulted because of this newly-proposed teaching arrangement. Since the graduate assistants in the education department were certified to teach, the credentials of the candidates were not an issue. Also, through a collaborative effort between WVU and the County School Superintendent, sick leave days to employ a substitute teacher were appropriated to the graduate assistant. Interviews with interested graduate students were held with the principal, site coordinator, grade-level teachers, and WVU's coordinator of clinical experiences and professional development schools. Requirements and responsibilities for the graduate assistant are as follows:

- a full-time graduate student,
- an elementary teaching certification,
- the assistantship to follow the school calendar rather than the WVU calendar,
- responsibility for the language arts curriculum,
- shared responsibility for duties and maintaining classroom environment,
- collaboration with teachers in planning, teaching, assessing, reporting, and conferencing,
- attendance at faculty and professional development meetings,
- hosting preservice teachers, and
- participating in documenting the effectiveness of the model.

Responsibilities of the site coordinator related to collaborating with WVU are as follows:

- reports progress of preservice teachers,
- maintains student progress files,
- confers with WVU professors,
- attends meetings,
- serves on WVU committees, and
- attends and presents at professional conferences.

Responsibilities of the site coordinator related to coordinating activities at Suncrest Primary are as follows:

- makes placements after consulting with teachers/principal,
- plans site-specific experiences,
- assists preservice teachers in areas of teaching,
- assists with lesson and unit planning,
- observes preservice teachers' lessons,
- assists with action research assignments,

- reviews preservice teachers' portfolios,
- conducts orientation for cohorts,
- provides letters of reference,
- hosts visitors to Teacher Center at Suncrest Primary,
- keeps abreast of supervision techniques through periodicals and conferences,
- serves as a resource person to other PDSs,
- provides released time for faculty to work with preservice teachers,
- manages Teacher Center budget,
- communicates Center's activities to parents, community, WVU, and
- develops handbook for preservice teachers.

Impact of the Graduate Assistant/Veteran Teacher Model: An Action Research Study

To ascertain the effectiveness of this model, in 2000-2001, graduate assistant, Kari Fox, and site coordinator, Kaye McCrory, engaged in an action research study. Participants in this study represented the five constituent groups: second grade children, parents of the second graders, teachers at Suncrest Primary, all preservice teachers placed at Suncrest, and the graduate assistant. In the study, the following five key aspects of this new model of supervision were examined.

- The primary-age students should continue to receive quality instruction.
- The parents should be satisfied with the co-teaching arrangement.
- The preservice teachers should continue to have quantity and quality of observations and mentoring.
- The faculty should feel that the arrangement was acceptable and effective.
- The graduate assistant should feel the model was beneficial to his/her educational experience.

Findings related to each of these five aspects follow.

<u>First, it was essential that the second graders received quality instruction.</u>

Even though it is hard to assess "quality instruction," on standardized tests, still it was important that the Stanford Achievement Test, which is given to West Virginia school children K-12, remain at a high level. Both classrooms (the single classroom with one veteran teacher and the shared classroom with the graduate assistant and veteran teacher) of second-graders either remained the same or exceeded previous years' results. Suncrest Primary students have always had high test scores; and faculty, staff, parents, and students wanted those to remain.

Anonymous surveys were also given to the second-grade students at the middle and end of the school year. Forty (40) of the forty (40) surveys were completed. The following questions were asked of the students and an overall percentage is given. Because of the developmental level of the students, the questions were read to the students and reworded, if necessary, for clarification. The possible answers were tabulated with responses of "yes", "sometimes", "no". The following questions were asked:

Do you think you learn a lot from both of your teachers?

100%-yes
0%-sometimes
0%-no

Do you think if you had a problem you could go to either teacher for help?

98%-yes
2%-sometimes
0%-no

Do both teachers follow the same school rules?

100%-yes
0%-sometimes
0%-no

Do you think that both of your teachers work well together to help you do your best?

100%-yes
0%-sometimes
0%-no

Do you think your teachers are friendly to one another?

100%-yes
0%-sometimes
0%-no

Do you like having a different morning and a different afternoon teacher?

100%-yes
0%-sometimes
0%-no

The students were asked to either write comments or draw pictures to tell how they felt about their teachers:

"I feel good about having two teachers because it's fun. You get to do a lot of things. And so that's how I feel about having two teachers."
"I love having two teachers."
"I love you both."
"It's cool having two teachers."
"I feel very happy with two teachers."
"I like my teachers."
"I like having to teachers."
"You are my two favritits teachers."
"I enjoy having two teachers because you learn more."
"I like having to teachers because they both teach different stuff."
"I feel good about having to teachers and Mrs. McCrory and Miss Fox is real nice."

Second, it was important that the parents were satisfied with the co-teaching arrangement. Anonymous surveys were sent to the parents at the middle and end of the school year. Thirty (30) of the forty (40) surveys which were sent during the year were returned from the families. Inquiries were made on the following questions. An overall percentage of the responses is given.

How satisfied are you with the co-teaching arrangement in your child's classroom?

93% -very satisfied
7%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the communication of the teachers (i.e., phone calls, written messages, newsletters, etc.)?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the availability of teachers for conferences?

86%-very satisfied
7%-moderately satisfied
7%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the classroom instruction?

93%-very satisfied
7%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with your child's overall experience in second grade?

86%-very satisfied
14%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

Parents' comments included:

"Mrs. McCrory and Ms. Fox work well together. The overall assessment of the teachers' arrangement is a positive influence for all the children. I am very pleased with this school and the teachers. Keep up the fantastic job."

"This arrangement teaches the children how to work with a variety of teachers and personalities. They may find this valuable for middle and high school."

"Ms. Fox has done a wonderful job."

"I think the dual teaching is preferable to having the same teacher all day."

"Second grade has been a wonderful experience for my daughter."

Third, it was important that the preservice teachers placed at Suncrest Primary continued to have a site coordinator available for consistent observations and daily mentoring. Anonymous surveys were given to the preservice teachers at the middle and end of the school year. All twenty-six (26) surveys were returned. The following questions were asked. An overall percentage is given.

How satisfied are you with the quality of feedback you receive during your pre-teaching experiences?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the quality of feedback you receive during your post-teaching experiences?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the expertise of your site coordinator?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the availability of your site coordinator?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the frequency of the assistance you receive for your professional growth?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the opportunities to participate in professional meetings?

86%-very satisfied
14%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the individual involvement of your site coordinator with you personally?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you overall with having your site coordinator available to you on a half-day basis?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

Selected comments are given below:

"Materials, advice, and lesson plan examples were shared with me. I received daily feedback, with praise for what I did well and helpful suggestions for what I could do differently."

"The site supervisor is always cheerful and eager to lend a hand. She is a pleasure to work with. She always makes time with us. She meets with us regularly and anytime we need additional meetings. She is not only a colleague but a friend."

"Kaye provides many opportunities for me to grow professionally, as well as provides an overwhelming amount of feedback. She is extremely reliable and experienced. She is a great asset to Suncrest."

"I am satisfied 100% with my Suncrest experience. I talk to other students in the program and it is obvious that my peers do not have this opportunity to use their coordinator. Mrs. McCrory is helpful to me in multiple ways. She is very informative and I go to her with every problem that I come across."

"It was nice to have Kaye available in the mornings-she always makes a point to sit down and talk with us after our observations."

"Having a half-day site coordinator available helped me organize my lessons."

Fourth, it was important that the arrangement was acceptable to and effective for the faculty.

An anonymous survey was given to all faculty members at the middle and end of the school year. The following questions were asked and an overall percentage given.

How satisfied are you with the availability of your site coordinator to work with the preservice teachers?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the availability of your site coordinator to work with the host teachers?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of communication about teacher center activities from your site coordinator?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the professional expertise (teaching and supervision) of your site coordinator

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the facilitation of teacher education paperwork by your site coordinator?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you with the graduate assistant's collaboration with the faculty?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

How satisfied are you overall with this model graduate teaching assistant and site coordinator?

100%-very satisfied
0%-moderately satisfied
0%-not satisfied

Selected comments include:
"A great way to share mentorship and enrich preservice experiences. The effectiveness would really be compromised without this model at Suncrest Primary."
"Very helpful to have site coordinator to give immediate help and/or answers."
"Great liaison between WVU/Suncrest Primary."
"Couldn't do the paperwork without Kaye's help."

Fifth, it was important that the model was beneficial to the first-year teaching graduate assistant.

Reflective journaling was done by both the veteran teacher and the graduate assistant. Both journals indicated that each teacher began the school year with great eagerness and a positive outlook. Several summer days were spent in talking with each other about curriculum, the room's housekeeping, and methods of effective communication with the parents, faculty, and each other. Other work sessions took place at the school itself in agreeing upon the physical layout of the classroom and examining the subject area textbooks. The other second-grade teacher was involved in many of those conversations. As the weeks progressed, not only were there daily conferences with each other, but additional phone calls and monthly reflection sessions were necessary.

The graduate assistant had excellent preparation in her coursework at the university and completed highly-successful practica experiences at Suncrest Primary. In contrast with new teacher orientation sessions, she already knew the faculty and staff, the school's strategic plan and focus, and was familiar with its close relationship with the university. She was able to focus her energy on learning the curriculum, utilizing new strategies, developing assessment instruments, and acquiring skills for communicating with parents. The assurance that a teaching partner would be there for advice and support allowed the graduate assistant to gain self-confidence and be even more prepared for her own

classroom. It was a perfect solution for the graduate assistant who wanted to go to school but gain teaching experience at the same time!

Mentoring other preservice teachers was an added benefit because of her recent experiences with the university coursework and practica. The peer advice she gave them was valued highly by the novice WVU students.

Teachers who needed to be absent for afternoon half-days always first asked the graduate assistant to substitute in their classrooms--evidence of their confidence in her ability. She became a regular teacher that they could depend upon. The principal, too, was pleased with having the graduate assistant in those classrooms - thus eliminating repeated orientation sessions for new teachers in the building and additional mentoring and monitoring of new personnel.

The graduate assistant elected to continue her teaching partnership at Suncrest Primary for the final year of her graduate assistantship. She felt the experience she had gained with this arrangement had been extremely beneficial--comparing her first year of teaching to that of her peers who have related how stressful and isolated they felt during their first year out of college.

Results of the Action Research Study:

- The second-grade students were happy with two teachers, and their SAT-9 test results remained at the high level of achievement as in past years.
- The parents were totally in agreement with the partnership, citing many advantages of having two teachers with their children.
- The preservice teachers were satisfied that they continued to have access to the site coordinator in order to receive frequent observations and mentoring.
- The faculty and staff were very satisfied that the site coordinator could remain as both a half-day supervisor for the preservice teachers and a faculty member of the school.
- The graduate assistant and veteran teacher, having both been truly committed to the co-teaching partnership, were immensely pleased with the model and continued the arrangement the next school year.

What made the teaching partnership of a veteran teacher and a novice graduate assistant work?

Job-sharing has traditionally been thought of as a work/life benefit designed for working parents. In this model's case, it served as an excellent opportunity for Suncrest Primary's continued quality supervision of the University's preservice teachers as well as giving the graduate assistant valuable teaching experience while she pursued her master's in education degree. As in other job-sharing situations, there are several aspects for a partnership to be effective and successful.

- **Compatibility** (being able to work with and bounce ideas off another person of both similar and complementary skills--this enhances the partnership) The teachers shared the

students, the classroom, and the materials--neither teacher was proprietary about their work; and their work styles, in general, made a harmonious arrangement.

- **Flexibility** (pitching in for one another, adjusting schedules if needed; if one teacher had a commitment with the University, parent, or personal obligation, the other stepped in for her)

- **Communication** (absolutely necessary; a 45-minute discussion almost every morning, notes on the desk, phone calls, e-mails)

- **Joint planning time** (necessary not only with each other but with the other second-grade teacher for a coordinated program--constantly collaborating with one another)

- **Acceptability** (model arrangement needs to be accepted by the administration, the University, other teachers, preservice teachers, parents, students)

- **Respectability** (of each other personally and professionally--the veteran teacher honored the graduate assistant for her youth, vitality, and her recent exposure to the newest in teaching methodologies; the graduate assistant honored the veteran for her experience)

- **Teaming** (attending parent conferences, after-school events, professional development workshops together) This teaching partnership is probably trickier, in some ways, than teaching in the classroom alone--because of the shared nature of the work, it was necessary to operate as a team even though the children were with different teachers at different times.

Next Steps – Tool Kit Sharing

In the fall of 2001, members of the Benedum Collaborative made a commitment to share their work with others interested in creating learning experiences that reflect our shared beliefs and to build a network of educators who put them into practice. The vehicle for this sharing is the Benedum Collaborative "Tool Kit." These tool kits consist of exemplary practices related to teacher education, classroom practices, and structures such as clinical coordination, governance, and participatory leadership. Based on the work described in this paper, Kaye McCrory has created a tool kit called, "A Graduate Assistant/Veteran Teacher Model of Supervision." This tool kit includes a PowerPoint presentation of an overview of the model and suggestions for implementation. For more information on accessing this tool kit, please contact the following:

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